

## **Superintendent Chat Question & Answers**

**April 22, 2020**

**8:00 a.m. / 6:30 p.m. Sessions**

### **Distance Learning**

Superintendent Pelzel shared the District's process to provide a Distance Learning program as a result of Governor Newsom's executive order to close schools for the remainder of the 2019/2020 year. Clear direction was given to all school districts to continue extending a learning program for grade level essential standards during school closures.

#### **What are the indicators to evaluate Distance Learning and whether changes are necessary?**

The District will gather feedback from parents, teachers, and site administrators around what is and is not working once we get through week 3 of Distance Learning. An example of this would be to review the teaching approach and best practices for those teachers who are excelling at this new learning method.

#### **What are the expectations for the Distance Learning model?**

Teachers have identified the priority standards for their respective grade levels to ensure students are ready to move on to the next grade level. Students are expected to engage in and complete 1 math and 1 English Language Arts activity per day. 3 Science lessons should be completed per week with Social Studies integrated in some fashion. PE is a state mandated activity and should be incorporated into the school week. Teachers and students also have access to art and music lessons each week as well.

Students should access the DreamBox and RazKids as supplemental resources weekly. The District recommends a minimum of 5 DreamBox lessons per week.

#### **Can parents opt to homeschool their child(ren) rather than follow the Distance Learning model? What options would be available for parents who choose to homeschool?**

Any parent has the right to homeschool their child. The parent would be required to disenroll the child and fill out the necessary paperwork for homeschooling. Parents would be on their own to provide lesson planning.

### **District Resources**

As of today, over 2,800 devices have been disbursed to NSD families. 650 hotspots have been made available to families with internet access needs.

The District is very pleased with the progress of the Tech Support Call Center created to assist families with all tech needs. As of yesterday, the call center has fielded 650 calls.

#### **What should I do if my device or hotspot or not functioning properly?**

Contact your site Principal or the Tech Support Line (661) 291-4159 English / 661-291-4180 Spanish Tech

**Is the hotspot access limited to specific times?**

Yes. Hotspots only run from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

**Are there hotspots available for families who did not request one initially?**

Yes. Families can request a hotspot by contacting the site Principal or the Tech Support Line (661) 291-4159 English / 661-291-4180 Spanish Tech

**Is there a cap or limit on the daily use of a hotspot's data?**

Yes. Currently, hotspots are only programmed to provide 750 megabytes per day. The District will later determine whether an increase in data will be required moving forward. Communication will be provided to families with updates.

**Requirements for Teachers**

**Can teachers pre-record teaching lessons or provide live lessons for students? Can parents speak with Principals on requests for teachers to provide a daily morning session to help answer instructional questions?**

The District is not opposed to live teaching lessons, however this is not a requirement in its negotiated Distance Learning Memorandum of Understanding with Newhall School District's Teachers Association.

The District is not requiring teachers to provide teaching lessons at a specified time as not all students will have the opportunity to attend. Live teaching lessons does limit flexibility for families too. Teachers and parents/students have the opportunity to meet every Friday to address specific topics. Parents are asked to be present during those one-on-one discussions.

The Distance Learning program is in its early stages and continues to evolve daily. Teachers are working through this new learning model, so please be patient as we all build our skillsets in this new teaching and learning environment.

The District will begin to explore the social and emotional learning component of teaching and how it can better support its students.

**When can the teachers' contract be revisited to review the Distance Learning model to ensure students are supported and held accountable, and their learning needs are being met in a live video setting?**

The District and the Superintendent cannot mandate live teaching lessons. The teachers' bargaining unit would have to negotiate and vote for changes not currently included in their Memorandum of Understanding Agreement for Distance Learning. Superintendent Pelzel will share parent concerns with the Governing Board. NTA signed its current Distance Learning MOU on Thursday, April 16, 2020.

The District would also like to remind families that many of its teachers are parents and are juggling the responsibilities of supporting the various needs for their students and supporting the needs of their children at home.

**Is there a maximum number of students who can connect live in Google Classroom?**

Yes. The maximum amount in one setting for purposes of teaching core instruction is 8 students.

### **Can teachers convert their current documents to user-friendly versions?**

The District is working with our District Instructional Coaches to explore ways to make documents easier to use.

### **Can the District provide access to the Benchmark consumables for students?**

While this concept is challenging considering the “Safer at Home” order, Cabinet will further discuss the concept of sending consumables home for student use.

### **Can parents ask their teachers to check-in with students at the end of the day?**

The District cannot mandate for teachers to check-in via live or pre-recorded videos. Most teachers are doing some type of a “question of the day”.

### **What should I do if my teacher is not responding to my emails?**

Parents and students should expect teacher responses to emails within 24 hours. If you have emailed your teacher and have not received a response within 24 hours, please send a follow up email in case it was missed.

### **Supporting Parents:**

#### **How can parents support the learning process when there is more than 1 child at home?**

While the District understands there are challenges involved with balancing more than 1 child, parents can look at working with 1 child while the other(s) can work independently on applications such as Dreambox and RazKids. Parents are encouraged to be flexible with the structure of their child’s instructional day.

#### **Why is the District not utilizing textbooks?**

The District’s current curriculum does not utilize a traditional textbook.

#### **How is the District working with parents who are considered “essential workers” and are unable to support learning at home during the recommended instructional times?**

Parents who are currently working can support their children after the school day. Our attendance window is open for teachers from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., however teachers can notify their office manager or principal when a child has logged in after those hours. The child’s attendance will be adjusted for that day.

#### **What is the purpose of “office hours”?**

Office hours provide a time for teachers and parents to communicate any concerns or address questions. Parents are also encouraged to use this time to visit Google Classroom to ensure their child has completed all assignments for the week.

## **Looking Ahead:**

### **What is the District's plan for the 2020/2021 year?**

With the "Stay at Home" order in place as of now, the District is unaware of how it will move forward with the new school year. The Los Angeles Office County Office of Education is putting together a task force to address the possible social-distancing idea Governor Newsom has mentioned in the past weeks. Several factors have to be considered with this learning model, such as scheduling, childcare, cleaning, etc. NSD is committed to continuing to work with local districts and state/county officials to make an informed decisions on how it will move forward. As we know more, we will share with parents.

For now, the District will begin planning for a Distance Learning format for its Extended School Year program in the summer.

### **Will the District move forward with 6<sup>th</sup> grade promotions?**

The District is exploring the possibility of face-to-face or virtual promotions. Safety is the first priority. 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers will meet to discuss what the District's options could look like and more information will be provided in the weeks to come. If "Stay at Home" orders are lifted the District can explore a ceremony even if it is in late June.

### **When can students pick up the materials left behind in classrooms?**

The District will schedule dates in early June for families to drop off devices and pick-up any materials left behind in classrooms. It is our hope that the "Stay at Home" order is lifted by that time. District Nurses are working with families now to have medications picked up from sites. Families are encouraged to contact their Principals if they have medications at school.

### **Will the current school year be extended into late June?**

There is not plan to extend the current school year at this time. The last day of school is Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Would lower grades (TK - 3<sup>rd</sup>) be able to work off of packets instead of the Distance Learning model if we do not return to traditional school in fall?**

The District cannot commit to that at this time. The process of creating packets for an entire District is not feasible considering the "Safer at Home" orders currently in place and there are several challenges to consider with a packet model. Currently, there are no requirements for teachers to push out worksheets to students. There is also no expectation for parents to print or provide their own resources.

### **How will 6<sup>th</sup> grade students be assessed for placement at Hart District in the fall?**

Hart District is not planning to give 6<sup>th</sup> grade math assessment at this time. They will look at 5<sup>th</sup> grade math scores and 6<sup>th</sup> grade math scores for placement in the 2020/2021 year

### **How will student progress be monitored heading into next year?**

All state testing for grades 3-6<sup>th</sup> have also been suspended for the 2019/2020 year. Teachers will monitor student progress and give their own assessments for Trimesters 3. Primary teachers are working through the process as those assessments are typically completed one-on-one in person.

The final decision on grading for Trimester 3 is still to be finalized and must be approved by the Governing Board. The District's leadership team will further discuss for Trimester 3 grading and assessments.

Trimester 2 report cards will be distributed via regular mail to families or the Aeries portal if you have access. Trimester 3 report cards will be distributed in an electronic format. More information will be shared at that point in time.

**Will parents be given the opportunity to provide feedback or recommendations for future planning?**

The District has utilized its School Effectiveness Survey in the past to gather feedback and will likely use the same process to gather feedback on the current learning model. Parents are always welcome to contact Superintendent Pelzel with any feedback or comments at: [jpelzel@newhallsd.com](mailto:jpelzel@newhallsd.com). A response is typical within 24 hours.

**Will NSD consider changing its 2020/2021 start date to September?**

The first day of school is a negotiated contract item with NSD's bargaining units.

**Will teachers be switched to other sites for the 2020/2021 year? The District needs to maintain stability at this point in time with the new Distance Learning module.**

The movement of teachers for the 2020/2021 will depend on projected enrollment, which is expected to decline. Teachers would be moved if there are staffing needs at other sites or if a transfer request is submitted.

**Is the District offering an after school ASES program?**

NSD is offering an ASES program out of Newhall Elementary with 36 children whose parents are essential workers. Social distancing orders only permit 9 students per classroom. The District attempted to offer other childcare options, but there weren't enough enrollment numbers to move forward with additional programs.

**Final thoughts:**

Superintendent Pelzel shared that the District continues to reflect every week on how sites can better evolve the flow of Distance Learning program. One of these ways is by having site administrators share the site's successes, challenges and needs. This input has helped prompt changes in some of our processes. This information is also shared with NSD's Governing Board.

Superintendent Pelzel will schedule Chat Sessions in May and June to gather more feedback and maintain all families informed. In the meantime, the District will continue to push out communication.